DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 262 834 JC 850 541

AUTHOR Young, Darroch F.
TITLE Educational Planning in a Changing Environment: A Retrospective of the 1982 Santa Monica College Symposium.
INSTITUTION Santa Monica Coll., CA.
PUB DATE Oct 85
NOTE 13p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Planning; *Community Colleges; Educational Planning; Needs Assessment; Organizational Change; *Organizational Objectives; *Participative Decision Making; *Self Evaluation (Groups); Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

In February 1982, a symposium was conducted at Santa Monica College (SMC) to inform the college community about the tumultuous changes which had occurred at the college from 1971 to 1982, and to gain broad-based participation in determining the direction of the college. The symposium also attempted to delineate broad philosophical principles that could guide future problem solving and identify the issues of greatest concern. The symposium not only identified these principles and issues, but also formed a meaningful agenda for the institution. Recommendations included the following: (1) expand student assessment and placement practices to include all students and implement a continuous advisement process; (2) establish a high priority for staff development activities; (3) explore methods for increasing income, as well as for reducing expenditures; (4) maintain the high quality of support services; (5) emphasize departmental participation in overall decision making; (6) determine ways to enhance instructional quality in the institution and the classroom, with particular attention to academic standards and classroom expectations; (7) enforce existing educational policies governing such matters as student probation, course prerequisites, and course reports; and revise priority registration procedures accordingly; (8) maintain the services necessary to continue to provide a desirable physical setting for students and staff; and (9) continue the appropriate conversion of part-time to full-time faculty positions, with attention to affirmative action guidelines. A description of planning, preparations, and procedures related to the symposium is included. (LAL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED262834

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT:

A Retrospective of the 1982 Santa Monica College Symposium

Darroch F. Young
Administrative Dean of Instruction
Santa Monica College
October, 1985

JC 850 541

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D. F. Young

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

INTENTION

From 1971 to 1982, Santa Monica College, like many community colleges in California, went through a period of tumultuous change. More specifically, the college experienced a 64% growth in headcount enrollment in credit courses while simultaneously experiencing a 2% decline in full-time students. In addition to these size changes, the college student-mix changed during this time, going from 11% ethnic minorities to 30% ethnic minorities. Concurrently, there was a reversal in the gender representation, with women going from 45% to 56% of the student population. Furthermore, there was a significant influx of foreign-born students during the period of 1971 to 1982.

Along with the change in student characteristics, student educational goals also changed. The oscillations of student goals was most noticeable in the transfer function. From 1971 to 1975, the college experienced a 9% increase in the number of students transferring to universities. However, from 1975 to 1982, the college experienced a 22% decline in the number of transfer students. These gyrations in student educational goals were not limited to the transfer function. The college experienced a comparable magnitude of change in each element of the college mission. These changes included a deterioration of basic skills among entering students, an increase of community participation (on a part-time basis) in credit courses, and a rapid change of the technology in the job training programs.

The aforementioned changes were also matched by probably the most uncertain period of community college funding in the history of California Community Colleges. Specifically, there were notable changes in funding in 1973, 1975, 1976, 1978, 1979, 1981 and 1982. In other words, in seven out of the 11 years under consideration, there were significant changes in funding for community colleges. In particular, in 1982 the college anticipated further necessary financial retrenchment following what had already been austere years after the passage of Proposition 13.

The purpose of detailing all of these changes between 1971 and 1982 is not to provide a complete chronology for this time. Rather, it is intended to provide a sense of the environment in which Santa Monica College found itself in 1982. It was the perception of the college that this magnitude of change was taking its toll on staff morale. The effect took the form of inaccurate perceptions of the college, stress from having to cope with an educational system in a state of flux, and anxiety about future financial uncertainties--particularly in terms of most staff being unsure of the strategies to be used by the college for dealing with the change and the existing financial constraints. Furthermore, there was the belief that the college community wanted broad-based participation in determining the direction of the college. As a result, the college president decided that the entire college community should take three days to focus on these issues and to formulate recommendations for action.

DESCRIPTION

On February 2-4, 1982, a three-day college-wide symposium was conducted which was entitled "Santa Monica College and Your Future." The symposium itself attempted to involve all administrators, faculty, and classified employees. Furthermore, the Board of Trustees was invited to participate in all of the general sessions. In fact, approximately 250 employees were able to participate in the full symposium, and many of the trustees participated in the general sessions.

Four general session presentations provided the participants at the symposium with a retrospective look at the college and with the information necessary for them to examine the issues confronting the college. In addition, participants were involved in a series of prestructured, cross-college, small-group discussions that focused on task-oriented questions related to the choices facing the college. This examination of issues culminated with departmental discussions of the same questions aired in the small groups during the previous two days.

The preparation for the symposium was well orchestrated to insure success of the endeavor. The presenters at the general sessions were selected from both faculty and administration; and they frequently worked in tandem. Each presenter was given a fixed time limit, and the presentations were rehearsed and timed prior to the symposium. However, there was no screening of presentation content so that the presenters were free to represent their topics in their own way.

Each participant in the symposium was assigned to a small group to insure that each small-group discussion included representatives from each segment of the college community and each area of the college. All small-group discussion leaders and recorders were given training sessions prior to the symposium so that the discussions could be properly facilitated and documented. The general sessions and small-group discussions were conducted in different facilities throughout the symposium so that participants were provided with fresh environments. All food was made available on campus to prevent participant attrition and tardiness during the three days.

The first general session focused on the changes in Santa Monica College from 1962 to 1982. More specifically, the presentation examined changes in student characteristics (day/night, full-time/part-time, graded/ungraded, men/women, ethnic distribution); changes in certificated staffing patterns; changes in the allocation of WTH by instructional discipline (including specific examination of growth and decline areas); student majors; student educational goals; changes in the foreign-born student population; changes in student services; changes in instructional support services; and a thorough examination of the transfer function of the college. The small-group discussions attempted to evaluate the changes that had occurred over the last 20 years and recommend new directions for the college to take in the future.

The second general session and subsequent small-group discussions dealt with the issue of quality of instruction. More specifically, the session attempted to develop two defined perspectives - faculty expectations of the college, and institutional expectations of the faculty as these expectations

relate to quality education. The small-group discussions also attempted to differentiate between expectations that required fiscal resources and expectations that did not require financial support.

The third general session focused on accurately portraying the financial status of the college and the related fiscal constraints facing the college. The presentation also outlined a series of alternative strategies for adjusting to the fiscal constraints. The small-group discussions then tried to accomplish three tasks: (1) develop additional strategies; (2) assess each strategy in terms of its impact on students, staff and the institution as a whole; and (3) develop general principles that the institution should use in selecting a fiscal strategy.

The final general session and related small-group discussions dealt with the following five major dilemmas facing the college at that time:

1. What criteria should be used by SMC in evaluating programs and services for purposes of reduction?
2. How can the institution maintain or improve its affirmative action efforts while constraints are being imposed on the college? (e.g. Should faculty reductions, if necessary, be on a last-in/first-out basis? Should students be accepted on a first-come/first-served basis?)
3. How can SMC improve the quality of education while the real income of the college is declining? (e.g. Regarding the quality issues requiring money, are some more important than others?)
4. What criteria should be used by SMC in allocating resources between areas of the budget? (e.g. Level of service to students vs. level of support to faculty, instruction vs. student services, services vs. equipment/supplies vs. staff development?)
5. What criteria should be used to determine the portion of resources devoted to summer school as opposed to the regular school year? (e.g. Is summer school an integral part of the SMC program or is it "extra" relative to the remainder of the year's program?)

The third day consisted of each department on campus addressing the same questions posed to the small groups during the previous two days. Each department then prepared a departmental response to the questions.

At the end of each day of the symposium, all participants were asked to evaluate each aspect of the day's activities. These evaluations were tabulated and incorporated into an overall evaluation statement of the symposium. Following the completion of the symposium, a written synopsis was prepared, based on recorder notes and department reports, and was disseminated to all employees. An oral presentation was prepared and delivered to the college's General Advisory Board. Finally, the Board of Trustees devoted a portion of one of their meetings to discussing the outcomes of the symposium.

RESULTS

Participant evaluation indicated that the symposium was extremely worthwhile because it was well-organized, because the presenters and group discussion leaders were well-prepared, and because the participants had ample opportunity to express their views openly. Since one of the objectives of the conference was to inform the college community about the problems confronting the college, it was gratifying to read that participants appreciated receiving the information and recognized that their views of the college had broadened. Finally, most participants felt that the symposium should be repeated and offered constructive suggestions for future symposiums.

Obviously, complex problems cannot be solved through the collective discussion of 250 people over three days, but solutions were not the goal of the symposium. Rather, it attempted to identify broad philosophical principles that could guide future problem solving and to identify the issues of greatest concern to the college community. The college, using discussion recorders' notes and department reports, identified certain issues as those of primary concern to most participants in the symposium.

Participants expressed two general beliefs as fundamental to the college's operation:

1. The crucial factor in any decision for change must be whether or not that change will better meet the educational needs of the students.
2. Faculty and staff have a responsibility and a desire to be actively involved in determining the destiny of the college.

In addition, both small-group and departmental discussions yielded nine specific suggestions for dealing with the changes facing the college and for maintaining its excellence.

Presented below are the nine specific suggestions developed from the symposium in 1982 and a summary of the implementation as of the date of this report. In each case, the details of implementation are not exhaustive but highlight the major areas of action.

1. Expand student assessment and placement practices to include all students and to implement a continuous advisement process.

   As a result of this recommendation, the college developed a plan which is now referred to as a matriculation plan. Because a formalized approach to this problem was begun in 1982, the college was a successful applicant for being a participant in the pilot program for the state matriculation model in 1984. Unfortunately, the state program was not funded. However, Santa Monica College has begun to implement elements of the plan without special funding.

   The following elements of the plan have been developed and are currently being implemented:

   (a) A new application form to collect more information from all students upon their entry into the college.

(b) A process so that continuing students update their application data each semester (e.g. educational goals, major, transfer destination).

(c) A new two-part math assessment instrument.

(d) A new student handbook and academic planning guide.

(e) A new orientation videotape.

(f) A new process and videotape for all academic and lack-of-progress probationary students.

(g) A mandatory matriculation process for all students enrolled in more than six units which consists of:
1. assessment of English and math skills,
2. orientation to Santa Monica College, and
3. educational planning with a certificated counselor.

(h) An assessment brochure which is distributed to students when they receive their assessment test appointment.

(i) An improved data processing system to input and manage the matriculation data base.

(j) A mandatory skill assessment for all students enrolling in courses with prerequisite math or English skills.

2. Establish a high priority for staff development activities, such as sabbaticals, fellowships, in-service seminars and workshops to continue professional growth.

Ever since the formation of this recommendation, the college has made a concerted effort to provide more resources, effort, and energy to the area of staff development. Presented below is a list of these endeavors:

(a) The number of sabbaticals in the 1982 academic year was the equivalent of five semesters. That number has been doubled so that in the 1984 and 1985 academic years, ten semesters of sabbaticals were awarded. This is the maximum permitted under the college's board policy.

(b) The funds allocated for faculty conference attendance have received inflationary adjustments, and the base amount was doubled prior to the 1984 academic year. Furthermore, the allocation per conference was doubled at the same time.

(c) A wide range of workshops has been provided which included workshops on: use of the computer, dealing with disruptive students, stress reduction, medical problems, and planning for retirement.

(d) A computer loan program has been developed in which each semester ten different certificated employees are lent a computer for a semester. There are no performance requirements, so the employees are free to investigate the

computers as they see fit. In conjunction with this program, the college is also investigating a computer sales program, at discount rates, for all employees.

(e) The Women's Leadership Development Project was actively participated in by the college through sending ten women to the Asilomar conference.

(f) The Tri-State Institute for Staff Exchange among 20 community colleges in Arizona, California and Hawaii was created by the college. The first exchange occurred in Fall, 1985, between Santa Monica College and Hilo Community College.

(g) The three college staff development committees have been augmented by forming the Institute for Professional Development. The Institute is composed of representatives from faculty, classified staff, classified managers and certificated administrators exploring campus-wide staff development issues.

(h) An excellent staff fitness and recreation program has been maintained and embellished.

(i) An extensive orientation program has been developed for all new full-time faculty. The orientation includes two full days on campus prior to the fall semester, a 152-page orientation handbook ("Bridge to Excellence"), and a faculty mentor program. In the faculty mentor program, each new faculty member has been provided with a mentor who is a past president of the academic senate.

3. Explore methods for increasing income as well as for reducing expenditures, paying particular attention to the conservation of energy, resources and supplies.

The college has made a very deliberate effort to develop an effective energy conservation program. Through the efforts of numerous employees, a list of suggested energy conservation techniques was developed. Then, the college sought and received monies from the federal government to implement the energy conservation plan. The portions of the plan implemented in the past three years include: replacing the controllers and chiller in the Technology building; installing motion sensors for lighting control in several locations on campus; installing time clocks on lighting, heating and ventilation systems in most of the buildings on campus; and the replacement of incandescent lights with energy-saving lighting systems.

Probably more important than specific programs, the college can demonstrate implementation of this recommendation by recognizing that the college has maintained solvency during very difficult financial times while simultaneously undertaking numerous activities to improve the quality of the institution. This is particularly significant when it is recognized that Santa Monica College received one of the lowest amounts of revenue per ADA in the state during this time. The accomplishment of this feat is due to the entire college community

being well informed about the college's financial status and each member of the college community making a conscious effort to minimize expenditures.

In 1985, the college began an effort to solicit private donations to the college by hiring a consultant as a development officer. The donations are to be used to fund major capital expenditures that are not likely to be funded by the state. Since the effort just began, it is too early to assess the success of the endeavor.

4. Maintain the high quality of support services, such as the Library, IMC, LRC, EOP&S, and Disabled Students Center.

There has been a conscious effort by the college to maintain the quality of the support services through maintaining budget and staffing levels in each of the support services. In addition to the maintenance efforts, there have been a number of special efforts to improve the quality of the support services, including the following:

(a) The certificated staffing levels in the Library and in Counseling have been increased by one position each since Spring, 1982. This calculation excludes positions funded by special grant monies.

(b) A new computer lab was created in the LRC.

(c) A new math lab was created which doubled the capacity on campus for the math lab functions.

(d) The number of hours of Library service was expanded by having the Library open on Saturdays and Sundays and by extending Library hours during final exams.

(e) In an effort to keep pace with the extraordinary price increases in books and periodicals, the Library's book budget was increased by 10% in each of the most recent two fiscal years; and the periodical budget was increased by 30% last year and an additional 10% this year.

(f) An on-line data base for current and retrospective cataloging (OCLC) is being installed in the Library.

(g) Admissions and Records, Counseling, and Health Services were provided with remodeled facilities. In addition, the college has provided the Disabled Students Program with an Independent Living Center by remodeling one of the college-owned houses on Pearl Street.

(h) A new Job Placement Office was created to place vocational program completers in full-time jobs commensurate with their training.

(i) The position of Director of Instructional Data Processing was established to work with faculty members on integrating computers into their instructional programs.

(j) Special funding was received to establish a Transfer Center on campus.

5. Emphasize departmental participation in overall decision making.

In the summer of 1982, the college conducted a major reorganization of the instructional program. The reorganization called for collapsing four of the five divisions into two divisions. By creating two very large instructional divisions and a corresponding decrease in division deans, the department chairs and department members had to assume a greater role in the decision-making process. This was underscored by the development of a new responsibility description for department chairs in which the shift of responsibility was clearly delineated.

6. Determine ways to enhance quality instruction in the institution and the classroom, with particular attention to academic standards and classroom expectations.

There has been a deliberate effort by the college community to examine its practices in an effort to insure quality instruction and to develop new programs to enhance the quality of instruction at the college. These efforts include the following items:

(a) A structured examination of grading practices was conducted in Spring, 1982. Each department was provided with a summary of past grading practices and was requested to respond collectively to ten specific questions. It was hoped that this process would raise the consciousness of faculty concerning grading practices and result in changes in behavior where appropriate.

(b) A new program for academic achievers entitled the Scholars Program was developed by the college. This program is offered in partnership with all proximate universities (UCLA, CSUN, Loyola Marymount, Pepperdine and USC). The Scholars Program includes a mandatory, restricted core curriculum and numerous support services from the college and the universities. All students who successfully complete the program will be provided with guaranteed priority admission to any of the participating universities.

(c) A new program for superior students in the performing and applied arts was developed by the college. The new program, entitled the Mentor Program, offers students, with judged ability in one of nine subject areas, the opportunity to experience a tutorial relationship with a master in their chosen field. Furthermore, the relationship will also provide the students with appropriate tutelage for the achievement of their professional goals.

(d) A Job Placement Office was established to place students who complete a vocational program in full-time jobs commensurate with their training. Furthermore, the college is currently conducting an elaborate follow-up study of all vocational programs to ascertain their efficacy.

(e) A Developmental Skills Committee was established and a Coordinator of the Center for the Development of College Skills was appointed.

Both the committee and the coordinator are charged with providing an effective developmental skills program. The efforts to date have included: an evaluation of the college's assessment instruments in math and English, an attempted evaluation of the importance of basic skills in the general curriculum, and a statement as to how to define lack of progress for a remedial student. Furthermore, an experimental, integrated block program has been implemented for full-time students with skill deficiencies in math and English.

(f) A policy to provide an on-going comprehensive program review process was adopted by the college community. The stated purpose for this program review is to maintain and enhance the quality, vitality and responsiveness of programs at the college.

(g) A number of small adjustments were made in an effort to improve instructional quality. For example, the maximum class size in all English composition courses has been reduced from 35 to 25 in regular sections and from 45 to 35 in oversized sections.

(h) A commitment was made to improve and maintain the quality of the instructional equipment of the college. This is reflected by an increase of over 50% in district general fund expenditures for instructional equipment between the 1981-82 fiscal year and the present.

7. Enforce existing educational policies governing such matters as student probation and disqualification, course prerequisites, and course repeats, and revise priority registration procedures accordingly.

Following the formation of this recommendation, the college has taken deliberate steps to implement all elements of the recommendation. In the area of student probation and disqualification, not only are the policies being enforced, but the standards have been tightened. More specifically, in the lack-of-progress probation policy, students earning above 60 units must now complete a greater percentage of the units attempted than was true in 1982. In the academic probation policy, students can be disqualified more quickly than was true in 1982.

Registration priorities have also been revised. The most notable change has been to decrease significantly the registration priority of all students on academic and/or lack-of-progress probation. Concurrent with this change, new students who submit their applications in a timely manner are being given a higher registration priority so that they are registering ahead of most of the probationary students. Since the college continues to use units completed and GPA to establish priorities within continuing student groups, there is a distinct advantage given to a successful student and a very distinct disadvantage given to an unsuccessful student.

Enforcement of course repeats and course prerequisites was not possible in 1982 because of the lack of capabilities of the administrative computer system in use at that time. The college has

now converted to a new computer system which is capable of providing computerized student transcripts. This feature will permit the college in the future to enforce course repeat policies and course prerequisites at the time of student registration in courses.

8. Maintain the services necessary to continue to provide a desirable physical setting for students and staff.

The college has continually attempted to make optimum use of the limited acreage and facility space for a college of 18,000 students. This effort is reflected in the number of capital projects undertaken in each of the last three years. Since a list of these projects is not practical, suffice it to say that the college has attempted, on the average, over 35 capital projects each year for the last three years.

Included in the numerous capital projects has been a conscious effort to maintain and improve the aesthetics of the college. As a result, projects have included items such as the painting of buildings and the remodeling of the art patio. The college has continued to expend funds on items that are strictly for aesthetic purposes (e.g. landscaping, art prints for buildings). Through this dual effort, the college has attempted to improve the utilization of the physical plant and the desirability of the physical setting.

9. Continue the appropriate conversion of part-time to full-time faculty positions, with attention to affirmative action guidelines, while recognizing the contribution of part-time faculty and assuring them a more complete role in the college.

The major effort in this area comes from the college's hiring of new full-time faculty members in the last two years. In Fall, 1982, there were 209 contract and regular faculty positions. In Fall, 1985, there are 222 contract and regular faculty positions. Since the college enrollment has remained constant during that time, this hiring resulted in a corresponding net reduction of part-time faculty positions. Because of the number of retirements during the last two years, it is worth noting that the college actually hired 42 new full-time, contract faculty members in the last two years to achieve a net gain of 13 full-time faculty members. This last characteristic is important because it demonstrates that nearly 20% of the full-time faculty assumed their current positions within the last two years.

In terms of adherence to affirmative action guidelines, the characteristics of the most recent hirings for Fall, 1985 demonstrate the college's commitment to these principles. Of the 25 people hired into contract positions in Fall, 1985, 52% were women and 32% represented ethnic minorities.

CONCLUSION

In 1982, Santa Monica College offered a college-wide symposium to inform the college community about the changes that had occurred over the previous ten years in terms of their impact on the environment of the college at the time of the symposium. It was hoped that through information, explanation and discussion, the college community could more readily cope with the dynamics confronting the educational process in California Community Colleges, in general, and specifically at Santa Monica College. The response and evaluation of participants indicated that this objective was clearly achieved.

The symposium also attempted to delineate broad philosophical principles that could guide future problem solving and to identify the issues of greatest concern to the college community. In retrospect, the symposium not only identified these principles and issues but also, in the process, formed a meaningful basic agenda for the college. In the case of the nine specific recommendations, the college has made a demonstrable effort to implement each of the recommendations.

The broad-based, "town hall" approach to the formulation of college priorities was successful at Santa Monica College for numerous reasons which all contributed to the accomplishment of the venture. First, it had been a long time since the college had utilized such an approach. As a result, the activity was somewhat novel and there were relatively few doubters among the college community. Second, the symposium was extremely well organized, providing a very positive atmosphere for the participants. Third, the issues facing the college were real, not contrived. Therefore, participants felt some degree of urgency in dealing with the problems. Finally, the interaction of all of these variables was essential for the success of the symposium. That is, a successful symposium on this scale requires an extensive time commitment by the organizers and extremely high energy levels on the part of all participants. If all three factors had not existed, that commitment, enthusiasm and energy could probably not have been engendered.

Clearly, a symposium such as the one done in 1982 cannot be done frequently. However, when the proper environment exists, it is an extremely effective means of involving the entire college community in formulating the future of a college.

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE
FOR JUNIOR COLLEGES
DEC 2 0 1985